



2

Sign up for MAC's e-newsletters

Between the bi-monthly issues of the State of the Arts, our staff publishes four separate e-newsletters with opportunities and information:

- Artists' email newsletter
- Arts Educators' email newsletter
- Arts Organizations' email newsletter
- Public Artists' email newsletter

The newsletters contain information that has deadlines that are too short to make the State of the Arts. If you'd like to sign-up for one or more of these, please offer us your contact information and what you'd like to receive at: art.mt.gov/resources/resources_soasubscribe.asp or send us an email at: mac@mt.gov.

ARNI'S ADDENDUM

Arlynn Fishbaugh, Executive Director
afishbaugh@mt.gov



Shutdown: What a mess!

The federal government shutdown is still ongoing as I write this article. One can only hope it's running at full steam by the time this paper reaches your mailbox!

Approximately half of the arts council's money is federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The money we spend in one fiscal year is allocated to the agency the prior year. So, our operations through the end of this fiscal year (June 30, 2013) are not in peril, nor are our grantees' funds (except for possible delays in receiving the money). I should say that our funding is not in any greater peril than the 20% reduction we took this year in Congressional cuts to the NEA.

So what did the President, the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate have planned for the NEA's budget next year before all this drama began? Here is a report excerpted from Isaac Brown, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies' lobbyist in Washington, DC, in a report he provided to the state arts councils in August.

FY2014 appropriations delay By Isaac Brown, NASAA Legislative Counsel

(At the end of summer), efforts to pass legislation funding the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for FY2014 failed when Republican leadership, sensing that they did not have the support of their caucus, pulled the bill from consideration.

The House's FY2014 Interior Appropriations bill, which has jurisdiction over the NEA's budget, proposed reducing the agency's funding level by 49% (from \$146 million to \$75 million).

That bill was very controversial, not only for the severe cuts in funding for the arts endowment, but also due to the reductions it imposed on the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Interior.

The bill was introduced in early July and appeared to be heading for passage in the House after the House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee approved the measure on July 24, but a week later, Republican leadership announced that they would not bring the bill up for consideration in the House.

Not only was there uniform opposition to the measure by Democrats, but a sizable contingent of Republicans in the House opposed the measure as well, some voicing the sentiment that the cuts imposed were too severe, while others expressed disappointment that the bill did not reduce spending enough.

In the aftermath of the House's decision to delay a vote on the appropriations bill until September, it is looking more likely that the president

and Congress will have to agree to a continuing resolution to keep the government funded beyond Sept. 30. While the House has been stalled in its efforts, the Senate has yet to begin its process for considering an FY2014 budget for the NEA.

The day before adjourning for the August recess, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Jack Reed (D-RI) released a draft bill, which called for the NEA's budget to be increased to \$154.5 million for FY2014. While we are pleased that the Senate is recommending an increase in funding, the chances of this legislation advancing are extremely low given the short amount of time remaining before the end of the fiscal year, not to mention the substantial gulf that exists between the two chambers.

Note: This status remained unchained up to the shutdown of the government.

So what can you do?

Contact your Congressman and Senators and tell them what you think!

• Congressman Daines: 202-225-3211 or daines.house.gov/email-me

• Senator Baucus: 202-224-2651 (DC office) or 800-332-6106; max_baucus@baucus.senate.gov or msb@baucus.senate.gov; www.baucus.senate.gov/?p=contact

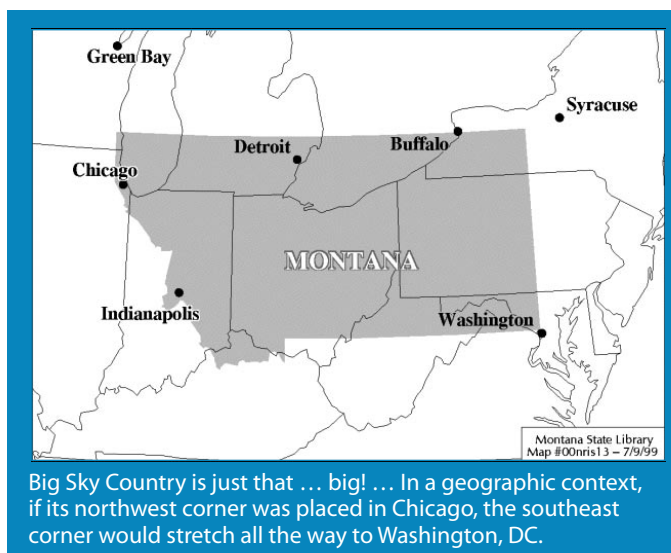
• Senator Tester: 202-224-2644 (DC office) or 866-554-4403; jontester@yahoo.com; www.testersenate.gov/?p=email_senator

In the meantime

Every three years MAC writes its major NEA grant, requesting funding for the coming three years. In that application we talk about our strategic plan and our priorities, how we address arts education and "the underserved."

The latter term is one invented by Congress, and for Montana, we define it as those living outside of Montana's seven largest towns, low-income people, racial minorities, all children, and people with disabilities.

To start the application, we are asked to describe our environment. I always find these Montana facts interesting, and I thought you would, too. Here is what we wrote:



Big Sky Country is just that ... big! ... In a geographic context, if its northwest corner was placed in Chicago, the southeast corner would stretch all the way to Washington, DC.

Montana's Sense of Place

When people think about the state of Montana, their imaginations spark with visions of "Big Sky Country" and "The Last Best Place." The Montana Arts Council (MAC) works hard to build a brand where Montana is known, far and wide, as "The Land of Creativity."

Big Sky Country is just that ... big! It spans nearly 700 miles east to west and 300 miles north to south. It takes 10 hours to drive across Montana non-stop at 70 m.p.h. In a geographic context, if its northwest corner was placed in Chicago, the southeast corner would stretch all the way to Washington, DC!

Montana's population density averages 6.8 persons per square mile, with just over a million people total.

Ninety-five percent of Montana towns have less than 5,000 residents, and only seven cities have more than 10,000. Billings is the largest city at 107,000 residents.

As a Montana rancher says, "Come on over for a visit, I'm 30 miles west of town. It's the second left."

Yet the term "rural" doesn't fully depict the vast remoteness of much of the state. Forty-five of Montana's 56 counties are classified as "frontier" by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, having less than six people per square mile.

Montana boasts a vibrant arts community. One out of every 60 people in the state's labor force is a working artist. Based on the last formal research the agency conducted, artists produced an economic impact of close to one-quarter of a billion dollars per year. The number of artists grew three times as fast as

the rest of the state's labor force between 1970 and 2010.

There are also over 400 nonprofit arts organizations in the state and hundreds of galleries and private-sector arts businesses (see economic studies at this link: art.mt.gov/resources/resources_artseconomic.asp#econartists).

As to Montana's education environment, accreditation standards for Montana's schools require curriculum in the arts. While there is no arts curriculum specialist at the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI), MAC has a strong relationship with their director of Content Standards and Instruction and the Indian Education Division. We are partnering with OPI to adopt, revise/create curriculum and identify best practices aligned to the upcoming National Core Arts Standards, which includes connections to Indian Education for All.

At least half of our rural districts are smaller than the median enrollment size (535 students) for public school districts nationwide. In fact, there are several counties with only one school in the entire county! Many rural districts also have high percentages of students living at or below the federal poverty level.

Montanans are well educated. The state ranks sixth nationally for residents over the age of 25 with a high school degree (90.8%) and, of those, 21st in the U.S. for advanced degrees.

Montana's population is aging. One out of five Montanans is over 60. In 2025, Montana will rank as the fifth oldest state per capita in the country.

Montana's median household income ranks 48th in the nation.

Montana's economy is bolstered by extractive industries (coal, oil and gas), tourism, farming and ranching. Revenues from

taxes on these industries, as well as a fiscally conservative state budget, have meant the state budget operated in the black during the last several years of economic stress. Montana produces almost 20% of all barley in the country (used for beer) and 9% of all wheat in the U.S. (used for flour and bread). And how 'bout them cows? There are 2-1/2 times the number of cows as people in Big Sky Country.

Politically, Montana is conservative. The Legislature remains very conservative. As in many states, what used to be viewed as a far-right conservative stance is now a middle-of-the-road perspective, showing how the tide has turned in the last decade. Political priorities emphasize economic development and education funding. These

are echoed in MAC's Operating Framework (the name we use for our "strategic plan").

The rural character of Montana creates citizens who experience and understand the fundamental link between community culture and civic pride. With few resources, Montanans are remarkable in the ways they form unique bonds through their communities' cultural roots.

See Arni's Addendum on page 5

STATE OF THE ARTS

State of the Arts is published six times a year by the Montana Arts Council and produced by *Lively Times*.

State of the Arts welcomes submissions of photographs, press releases and newsworthy information from individual artists and arts organizations.

Please check with the Montana Arts Council for reprint permission.

Deadline: The deadline for submissions is November 25, 2013, for the January/February 2014 issue. Send items to: Montana Arts Council, PO Box 202201, Helena, MT 59620-2201; phone 406-444-6430, fax 406-444-6548 or email mac@mt.gov.

Subscriptions: *State of the Arts* is available free of charge to Montana residents as a public service of the Montana Arts Council. To subscribe, please call 406-444-6430, or update or sign-up online at www.art.mt.gov. Out-of-state subscriptions at \$15 per year are welcome – mail your check to the Montana Arts Council, PO Box 202201, Helena, MT 59620.